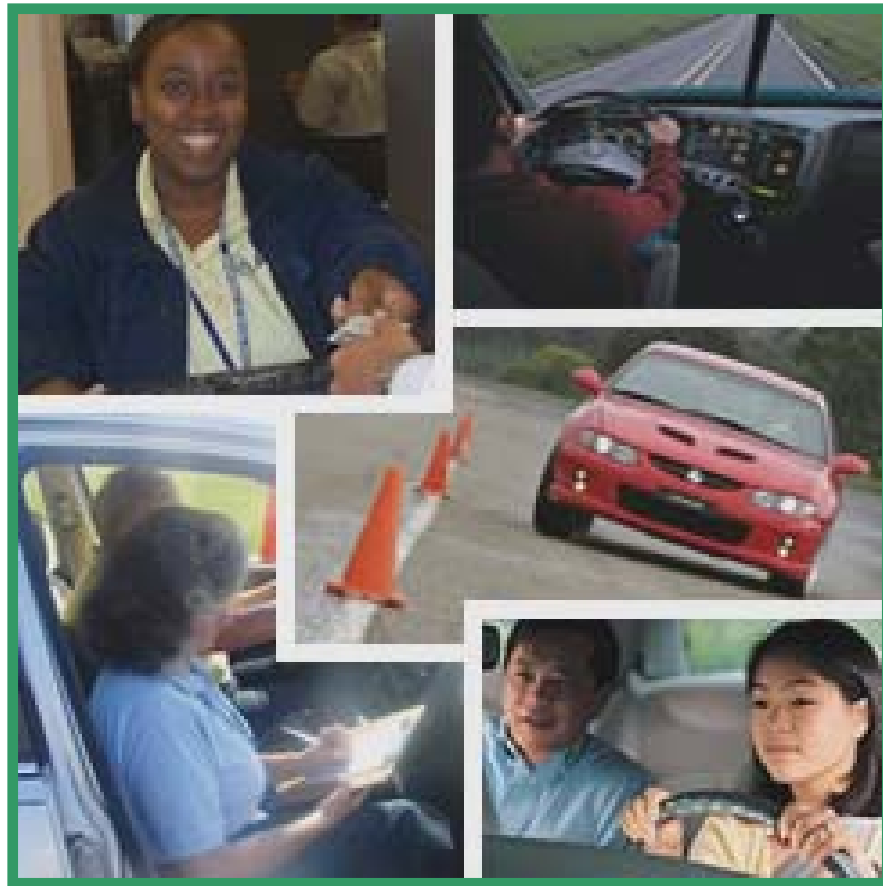




# GEORGIA DRIVER EDUCATION COMMISSION



*Summary of Accomplishments*  
*Enhancing teen driver education throughout the State*

# Georgia Driver Education Program

## History

The Georgia Driver's Education Commission (GDEC) was created on May 10, 2005 as a result of passage of Senate Bill 226 during the 2005 Georgia Legislative Session. SB 226 or *Joshua's Law* mandates the completion of a driver's education program for anyone who wishes to obtain a Georgia driver's license prior to age seventeen (17). Satisfaction of this requirement involves the completion of thirty (30) hours of classroom study and six (6) hours of behind-the-wheel training. The Commission may "recommend" to the Governor and the General Assembly changes in state programs, statutes, policies, budgets, and standards relating to the provision of driver education and training in this state, with the *objective of maximizing participation in driver's education, training and accident reduction*.

This Commission has worked tirelessly to identify options to enhance driver education throughout the state. A comprehensive plan that is *accessible and affordable* has been developed. But more importantly, a viable framework has been created for the future advancement of Georgia driver education.

As for the statutory objective, participation has increased in Georgia's Driver Education Program due to these efforts. Driver's education has been established in rural areas that previously had no prior access to driver education. Most importantly, each newly licensed 16-year-old is better prepared to take a vehicle out on the road alone.

The expansion of Georgia's driver education program includes:

<b>21</b>	<b>New Start-up Driver Education Programs</b>
<b>38</b>	<b>Enhancement or Expansion Programs of Existing Programs</b>
<b>348</b>	<b>New Driver Trainers</b>
<b>68</b>	<b>New Private Driver Education Schools</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Internet Based Programs for Classroom Component</b>
<b>47,195</b>	<b>Number of 16-year-olds receiving a Class D License (January 2007 through January 2008)</b>

## **Options**

The first task for GDEC was to ensure that options were available for students to complete mandatory driver's education before the January 1, 2007 statutory deadline of Joshua's Law. Four options were approved with each meeting the ***accessible and affordable*** criteria. The recommendation allows for numerous public and private programs to coexist and expand. In addition, each method incorporates parental involvement. All options are state approved and administered by the Georgia Department of Driver Services (DDS).

In addition to the existing traditional high school and private driver training programs, the Commission approved two virtual or internet-based programs to fulfill the classroom study component. (There are now three approved virtual programs.) A free and comprehensive ***Parent/Teen Guide*** was created to help parents who choose to teach the critical behind-the-wheel training requirement.

Parents and teens can choose the methods that best fit their lifestyle and budget to meet the requirements of Joshua's Law. Fees for the various programs range from no cost to \$750.00. In addition to the free **Parent/ Teen Guide**, the GDEC Grant Program enables many school programs to offer driver education at no charge or a reduced rate. Many of the grant supported schools offer scholarships for students from low income families.

## **New Programs Completed**

### **July 2007 through June 2008**

Classroom	3,802
Virtual (online)	19,294
Traditional Program (30 classroom and 6 behind-the-wheel hours)	31,360
Behind-the-Wheel	1,169
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>55,625</b>

## **Public Information**

Once the initial programs were approved, the Commission launched an extensive public information campaign to provide eligible students sufficient time to obtain training before their January 2007 birthdays. Public and private high schools and other community leaders and business partners were provided posters and brochures detailing the requirement change. In addition, DDS mails notification to all teens with a learner's permit ninety days before their eligibility for a road test. This allows time for the students to obtain the necessary training if not completed.

## **Website**

A web site was created dedicated to Georgia Driver Education:  
[www.gateendrivereducation.com](http://www.gateendrivereducation.com). The site is a one stop shop for information on the variety of

methods that will satisfy the necessary driver training requirement. In addition it includes free and practical training information for parents to utilize such as a “Hazard Recognition Checklist” and “What’s Your Driving IQ?” The website includes a web-based *Ask Teen Driver* function directly answered by DDS regulatory compliance analysts. In 2007, DDS handled 1,690 questions/comments from the *Ask Teen Driver* feature.

### **Grant Program**

Perhaps the most significant achievement has been the creation of the GDEC Grant Program to be issued to school systems or high schools and public libraries across the state. Over six million dollars has been awarded to 59 public high schools and 113 Georgia libraries to create or expand driver education efforts in their communities throughout the state. 10,200 Georgia students completed a driver education course funded with 2008 Grant Funding. It is expected that an additional 14,272 public high school students will soon have access to driver training as a result of the 2009 Grant Funding. Many more will be able to access virtual driver training via their local community libraries.

The FY 2008 Georgia Driver Education Commission Grant Program was authorized on April 11, 2007 to be issued to high schools and libraries across the state to enhance the future of driver education. This strategy maximizes available resources by integrating the many requests and ideas presented to the commission while awarding grants directly to public schools and libraries. This promotes innovative driver education solutions by enabling public school systems to seek partnerships with other foundations or private schools. By partnering with public libraries, teens without access to virtual driver education programs now have Internet capability.

The Georgia Governor’s Office of Highway Safety (GOHS) facilitates the allocation and application of funds to generate the highest return on the GDEC investment to improve the performance of beginning high school licensed drivers. A rating system for applications ranges from 1-100 points with a score of 75 points needed to be met for consideration. Preference points are given to applicants outside the metro-Atlanta area and also for areas where the nearest driver training is at least 40 miles away.

Specifically the purpose and objectives of this program are:

- To promote, aid and encourage the successful completion of a DDS approved driver training course for high school students who desire to qualify for a Georgia Class D driver’s license as required in Joshua’s Law.
- To facilitate knowledge and application of traffic safety rules, regulations, and procedures necessary for the safety of young licensed beginning drivers.

### **Support and Oversight**

GOHS provides support to applicants and grantees through sponsorship of pre-grant application training workshops and new grantee workshops; maintains a secured web site which provides a means to report and manage grant accomplishments, progress, problems, challenges, planned events, grant announcements, financial reimbursement claims, claim histories, grant amendment procedures and approval protocol; encourages local grantees to partner with state and national

highway safety campaigns; and distributes supplemental teenage driver safety program guidance and information to enhance the quality of grant projects.

### **Partnerships**

The Commission has merged talents from all areas: education, industry, and law enforcement among other community partners. Board Members have welcomed recommendations and many partnerships have been formed to further the Commission's mission.

***A. L. Burruss Institute***-The Burruss Institute prepared a "Public School Research Project" to identify Georgia school system needs regarding implementation of driver education programs and to raise awareness of resources and best practices.

***Children and Youth Coordinating Council***-The Commission approved funding to support the distribution and television network broadcasting of an Emmy Award Winning Video, ***Driving Ambition***. The video explains the new teen driving laws and responsibilities of teens and parents. It is designed to get the public interested in driver safety in a teen friendly way.

***C&C Driver Alliance***-A partnership with C&C Driver Alliance assists with teen driver safety awareness campaigns and provides information about "**Caution-Newly Licensed®**" car magnets. When magnets are displayed on the rear bumper, it helps protect the teen and their parents during mandatory driving lessons as well as other motorists. Department of Driver Services (DDS) customer service centers distribute informational brochures to parents urging them to identify their teen driver.

***Community Outreach***-The Commission regularly visits existing and newly-created programs.

***Subcommittees***-The GDEC formed subcommittees in 2008 to identify strategies to promote and improve teen driving safety. The subcommittees were chaired by GDEC members in the areas of (1) Training for New Drivers and (2) Influencing Cultural Change.

## **Funding**

Senate Bill 226 mandates a 5% add-on fine to fund the expansion or creation of driver training programs throughout Georgia. Funds began to accrue in May 2005 and will sunset June 30, 2013.

### **Fiscal Year 2005**

Funds Collected May 2005 through June 20, 2005

- \$6, 887.39

### **Fiscal Year 2006**

Funds Collected July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006

- \$5, 658,491.54

### Fiscal Year 2007

Funds Collected July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007

- \$9,590,973.13

### Fiscal Year 2008

Funds Collected July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008

- \$10,396,517.90

### Grand Total Collected through FY 2008

- \$25,652,869.95

## **Funds Appropriated**

The General Assembly appropriated \$2,756,218 for use in each of Fiscal Years 2007, 2008, and 2009 for a total of \$8,268,654.

### Approved Budget for Fiscal Years 2007 through 2009

\$ 6,803,304	Grants to public high schools and libraries
65,000	Attitudinal Behavior and A.L. Burruss Institute Research Studies
420,194	2007 Media Campaign
297,659	DDS Administrative Funding
406,875	GOHS Administrative Funding
<u>275,622</u>	10% Budget Reduction for Fiscal Year 2009
<u>\$ 8,268,654</u>	Total Appropriation for Three-Year Period

## **2007/2008 Grant Award Program**

### **Phase One Grants Awarded July 12, 2007**

The Commission awarded \$2,184,600 to 17 public high schools and 113 Georgia libraries to create or expand driver education efforts in their communities.

### **Library Awards**

\$270,800 was awarded to 16 Regional Library Systems and 14 county Library Systems. A total of 235 new computers will now be dedicated to teens that need access to approved online driver

education programs. A total of 30 applicants successfully applied and all received funding. The grant covers computers with stands, chairs and signage directing students to the terminals. This will improve high school students' accessibility to the DDS licensed on-line driver education phase.

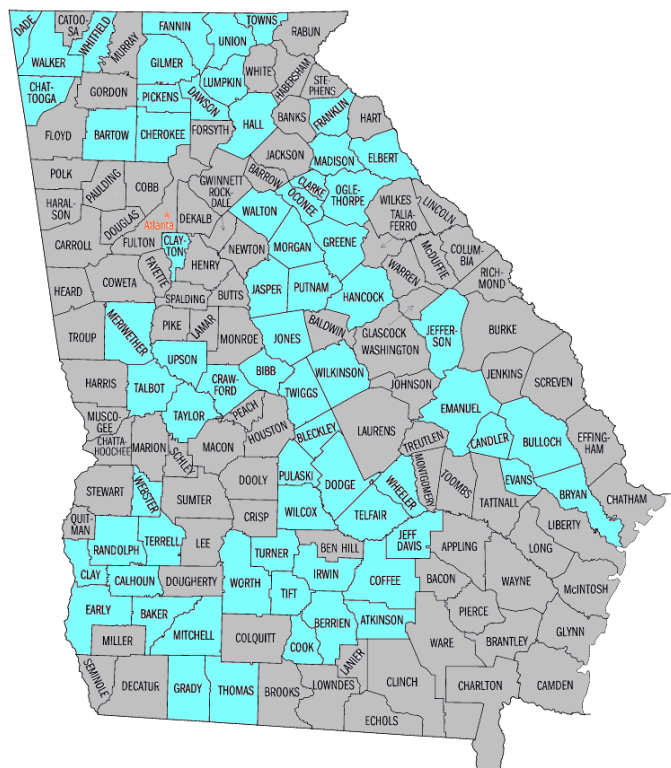
## Total Libraries Funded

235 GDEC Computers are now in 113 Georgia Libraries. Students have priority seating to access Internet-based driver education programs at local libraries.

**Libraries Funded**

Athens Regional Library System  
Bartow County Public Library  
Chattooga County Library System  
Cherokee Regional Library System  
Chestatee Regional Library System  
Clayton County Public Library System  
Coastal Plain Regional Library System  
Dalton-Whitfield County Library  
Desoto Trail Regional Library  
Elbert County Library System  
Fannin County Public Library  
Hall County Library System  
Jefferson County Library System  
Kinchafonee Regional Library System  
Lee County Library

Middle Georgia Regional Library  
 Mountain Regional Library  
 Ocmulgee Regional Library System  
 Pine Mountain Regional Library System  
 Roddenberry Memorial Library  
 Satilla Regional Library System  
 Screven-Jenkin Regional Library System  
 Sequoyah Regional Library System  
 Statesboro Regional Library  
 Thomas County Public Library System  
 Towns County Public Library  
 Uncle Remus Regional Library System  
 Union County Pubic Library



### **Georgia Public High School Awards**

This grant is to enhance an existing driver education program or to aid a start-up driver training program. Recipients demonstrated that they are able to meet high school students' learning needs by using DDS approved driver training methods.

#### **Phase 1 Grants Awarded July 12, 2007**

17 schools were awarded funding totaling \$1,913,800. The schools are:

Banks County School System	Meriwether County School System
Bleckley County Schools	Thomasville City School – Thomas County
Bryan County High School	Tift County High School
Calhoun High School – Gordon County	Brantley County High School
DeKalb County School System	Carroll County School System
Early County Board of Education	Telfair County High School
Elbert County High School	Wayne County School System
Madison County High School	Wilkinson County Schools
Marietta High School	

#### **Phase 2 Grants Awarded July 26, 2007**

Grants totaling \$1,915,500 have been awarded to 18 additional Georgia public high schools to make driver education more accessible, effective and affordable throughout the state. Public high school grantees will use these funds to create or enhance driver education programs in their schools. The schools include:

Effingham County High School	Jenkins County School System
Charlton County High School	Jones County High School
Clarke County High School	Lumpkin County High School
Coffee County Board of Education	Pickens County High School
Dade County High School	Rabun County High School
Forsyth County High School	South Effingham High School
Gilmer County Schools	Tattall County High School
Gordon Lee High School	White County High School
Harris County High School	

#### **Phase 3 Grants Awarded July 1, 2008**

Grants totaling \$382,300 were awarded to three public high schools:

Dawson County High School  
Stephens County Schools  
Toombs County High School



## **2009 Grant Award Program**

### **Phase 1 Grants Awarded July 24, 2008**

Grants totaling \$2,027,300 were awarded to seventeen public high schools and/or County Boards of Education.

Bainbridge High School  
Bartow County Schools  
Burke County High School  
Cairo High School  
Dalton Public Schools  
Dublin High School  
Glynn County Schools  
Gordon County Board of Education  
Gwinnett County Public Schools

Hancock County Schools  
Hart County High School  
McIntosh County Schools  
Sumter County Schools  
Thomas County Central High School  
Upson-Lee High School  
Walton County Public Schools  
Warren County High School

### **Phase 2 Grants Awarded July 28, 2008**

Grants totaling \$288,900 were awarded to four public high schools.

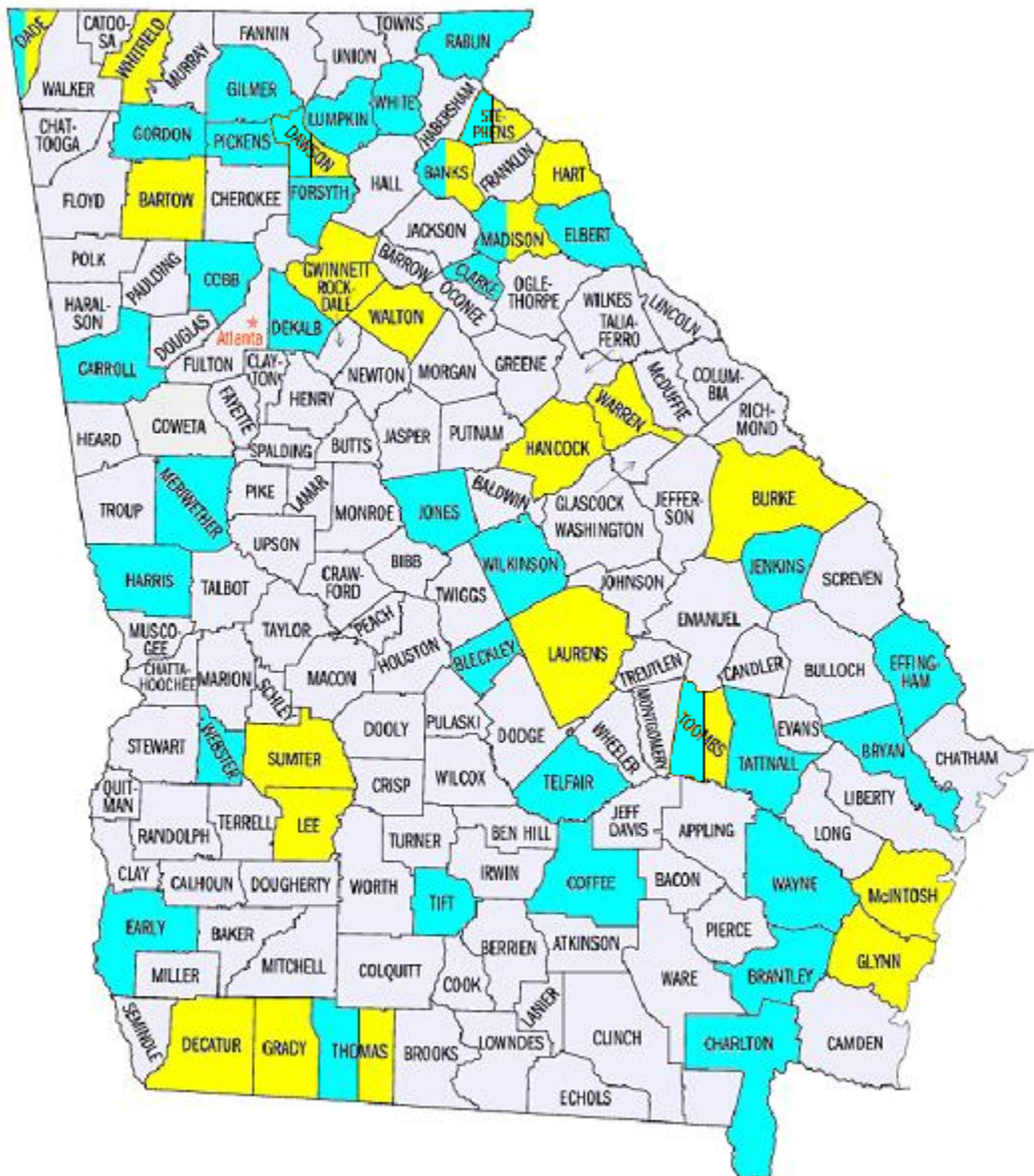
Banks County Schools  
Dade County High School  
Madison County High School  
Thomasville City Schools

# Total Schools Funded

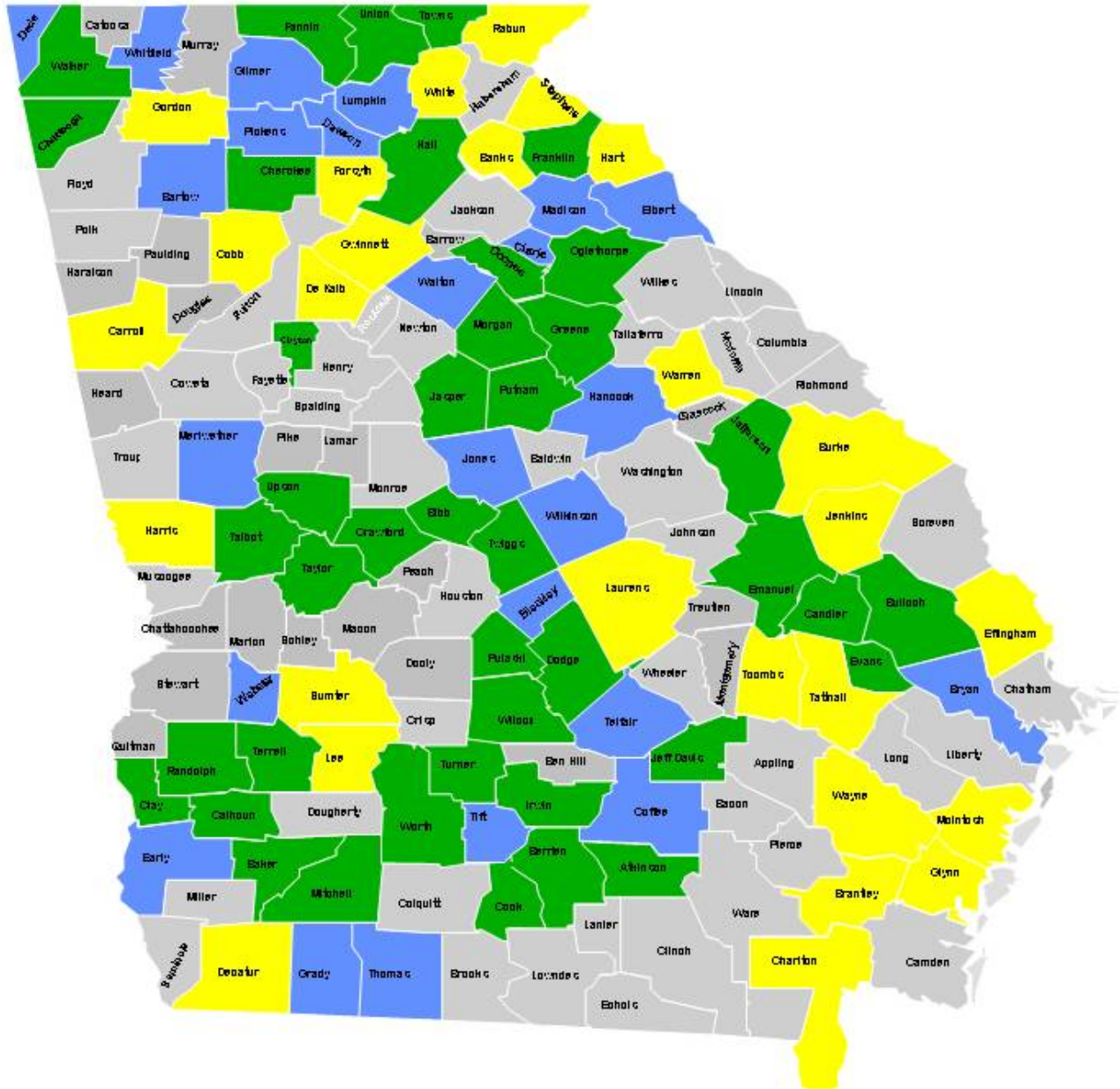
Fifty-nine individual public high schools have received funding to create or enhance driver education programs through GDEC. More Georgia teens (over 17,000) now have affordable and accessible driver education that was not previously available.

 **2007/2008 Grant Recipients**

 **2009 Grant Recipients**



## Total Grant Recipients

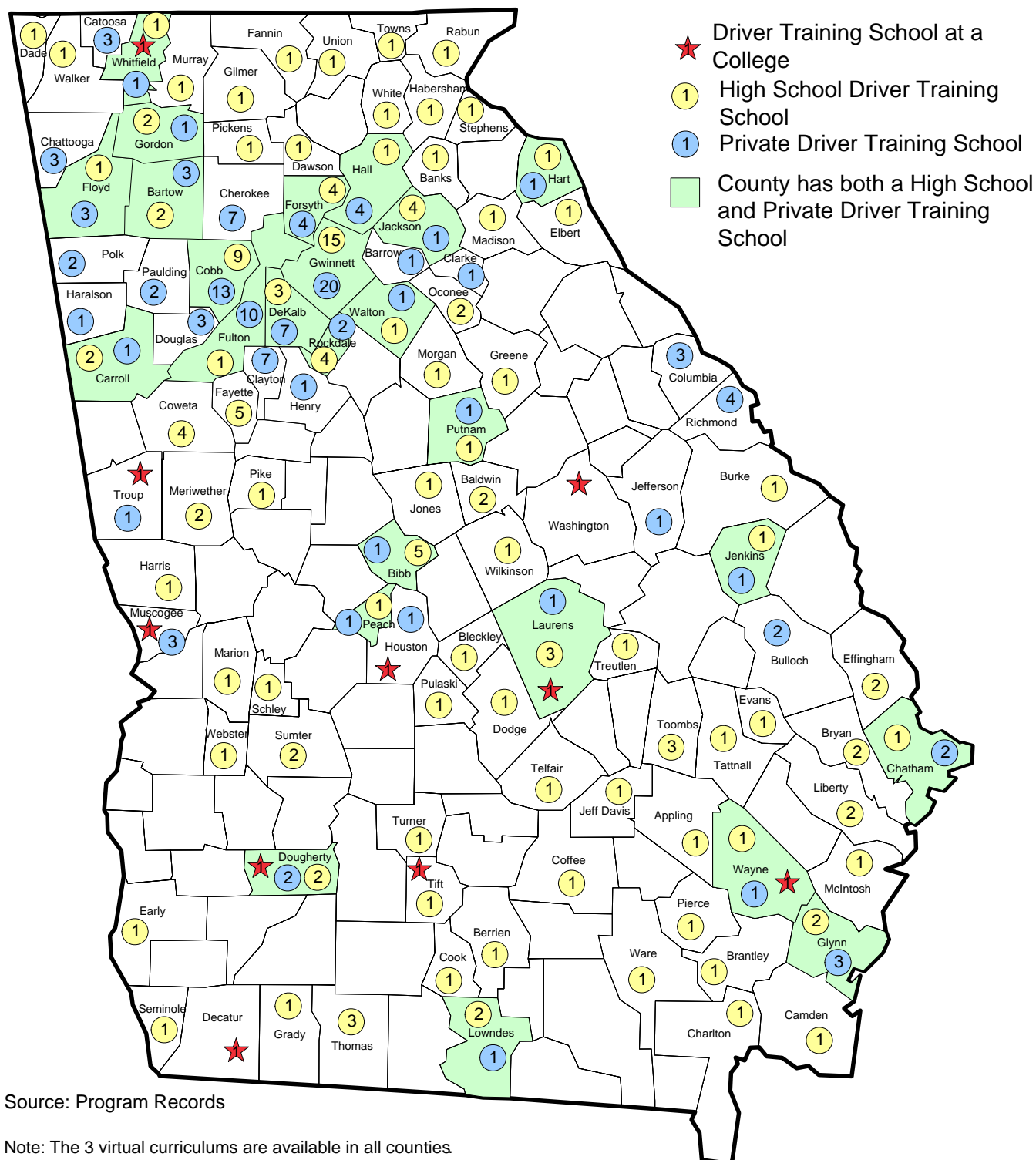


### High School Grant Recipients

### Library Grant Recipients

### Both Library and High School Recipients

**Exhibit 2**  
**Driver Training Locations**  
As of February 1, 2008



Source: Program Records

Note: The 3 virtual curriculums are available in all counties.

In the Private count, 3 schools are not available to the general public.

The 5 Technical Schools currently providing reports to DDS are included. TCSG reports that there are 8 additional schools providing Driver Training.

### **Analysis And Data Collection**

In addition to the efforts of the Commission, DDS implemented a new web-based functionality that will analyze the impact of driver training upon the driving behavior of teen drivers, particularly statistical information about the effect upon convictions for moving violations. Information pertaining to student demographics, course type, and graduation date is electronically transmitted from any of the 234 licensed driver trainings schools directly to DDS. This electronic data will be a key factor in evaluating the effectiveness of driver education.

Implementation of the online program has been well received not only by Georgia teens, but by the licensed driver training school utilizing this service. Additional benefits include a reduction in unlicensed driver training schools and departmental printing costs.

### **Thank You**

The many accomplishments of the Commission have been made possible, in large part, by the support of Governor Perdue and the members of the General Assembly. The Driver Education Commission, DDS and GOHS are committed to continuing to work in close partnership to continue these life saving efforts.

### **Commission Members**

Gregory C. Dozier, Department of Driver Services, *Chairman*

Bob Dallas, Governor's Office of Highway Safety, *Vice Chairman*

Lynn E. Breck, New London School of Driving

Brad Bryant, Georgia Department of Education

William F. Farwig, ABF Freight System, Inc.

Frankie Jones, University of Georgia Traffic Injury Prevention Institute

Trace Lee Overton, East Coweta High School

James Bryce Robinson, Harris County High School

### **Contact us:**

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Complete information on the GOHS Grant Program can be found at  
**<http://www.gahighwaysafety/org/driversedgrants/>**